

The "Lone Ranger" Rides Again

by Me

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Summary: An anonymous gift to a troubled youth through a newspaper reporter helps Monica remind him of the reason he became a reporter.  
Rated PG

This is dedicated to all those who make a difference, large or small, in childrens' lives, with no glory except that which will come when they get to Heaven.

Monica and Tess enjoyed a cup of coffee at a fancy diner. "It reminds one of the 50s," remarked Monica. "Those were good days in this country."

"Good, but not perfect the way some see them," noted Tess. "We've always had a tendency to ignore evil, unfortunately." She sighed. "That's going to be part of your next assignment."

Andrew entered forlornly. When asked what was wrong, he explained. "I just took a baby home to be with the Lord. He'd been severely neglected."

"He's where there will be joy everlasting now," Tess reminded him, putting a compassionate hand on his shoulder.

Andrew nodded slowly. "What do you tell his siblings, though; they're going to a foster home now. How do you explain it to them."

"God has a way," was all Tess would say before advising Monica to report to the local newspaper's office for a temporary secretarial position. \*\*\*

Monica walked into the newsroom still thinking about the story Andrew told her - the neglect had been much worse than she could imagine.

Probably something with drugs, she considered before reminding herself not to stand in judgment of the parents. It's the children who need your help, she told herself.

A reporter, Sal Scarsone, walked up to her. "You're Monica, the new girl, right?" He looked to weigh about 200 pounds, almost the stereotypical editor of the old days of newspapers. "Listen, I've gotta run down and cover a neglect case, if I e-mail in the story can you type it up so it gets to press." She agreed to.

As Monica proofread and copy-edited the story on the computer, the loneliness and despair of the situation touched her deeply. She wished she could leave this post and go to comfort those children - at least after work. Something inside kept telling her to wait a few days, however. Pondering what the kids must have gone through - and what they were going through now - she needed some sort of break. So, as she clicked the button to send the document to the layout people, she hollered "COPY!" for the whole room to hear. Several people stared at her. Others giggled, at the loud Irish tone. Others merely went about their business as Monica got up to retrieve her third cup of coffee.

"What was that copy' for," inquired sports editor Robert Mack at the coffeepot.

"Oh, just a little release," she explained. "In the old days, people used to yell it whenever a story was finished and ready for copy-editing, and an intern would run and get the story, then run over to the editing table." She paused. "Come to think of it, that wasn't really the right time to say it, because it had already been edited, but there isn't really a good time to do it now."

Robert looked at Monica like she was crazy, when one of the senior editors, in his early seventies, nodded. "She's right, Rob, though it makes me wonder if she's gonna call what's in her hand a cup o' joe' next." Looking at Monica, he inquired "how did you know about that; you can't have been around that long."

"Longer than you think," remarked the angel. "My Father tells me lots of things like that."

"He was in the news business, huh? Well, I figured you had to have some experience, your resume looked quite impressive." The senior editor walked away, chuckling to himself. "Copy," he repeated a couple times.

After several days of trying to fit time into Sal's harrowing schedule to talk to him, Monica found an envelope plopped onto her desk. "I would say fan mail," blurted Sal, "but reporters don't get fan mail, we're supposed to be objective. Besides, it feels like it's got a tape. Makes me think someone's sending resumes and got us mixed up with a radio station. You handle it, if it asks for my autograph sign it." He walked off, giving Monica time to examine the letter's contents.

She got a warm feeling as she opened it. "Dear Mr. Scarsone," it began, "I read about the tragic and wanton case of neglect on which you reported recently. First, let me commend you for your reporting. Second, let me ask you to please forward this messages of God's love to..." Wow, she thought as she read onward. She noticed Tess beside

her, invisible to any others int he office. "Is this from an angel?"

"No, just a person with a burden for the hurting of our society, especially the children," Tess explained.

Monica noted that Mr. Scarsone requested that she handle it. "I'll take it by when I get off work..."

"Angel Girl, remember who your assignment is," Tess remarked warmly.

Monica thought a moment, then shook her head. "He's so objective, I don't think he'd want to help."

"Those other kids are in good hands now, if it takes an extra day or two to get it to them that won't make much of a difference. If this were a rush job I'd tell you." She smiled warmly. "Besides, deep down, God knows he wants to help. Come in early tomorrow, before he gets going, and discuss this with him." Monica sighed, and agreed to try that. \*\*\*

Sal noticed Monica entering the office around the crack of dawn the next morning. "Boy, are you an early riser."

"Figured I may as well," noted Monica, "I didn't sleep." Which was true - angels don't sleep.

"Well, if there's anything on your mind just let me know." He sounded only vaguely sincere. "Say, I've been meaning to tell you, I loved that story about you yellin' copy!'" He laughed. "Wish I had been there; I haven't heard that in...oh, maybe thirty years."

"That must have been a hard case to report, with all that trash piled up, the filth and animal waste..." She trailed off, thinking of trying to live in such conditions.

She detected a hint of concern in Sal, but he merely muttered "yeah, well, it's news. There's a lot of that today."

"Maybe not so severe, but still..." She trailed off, then retrieved the letter. "I thought you might appreciate reading this."

"Hey, like I said, I'm not the news, I shouldn't be getting fan mail." He paused as he read it. Deliver a message of love? Now how could one do that and remain objective? That's what secretaries like Monica were for.

"I thought it very touching," the angel commented.

Sal smiled. "Yeah, it is. I thought about a position like that, where I'd be telling people about things like that in some sort of social commentary...." He trailed off, grimacing a little.

"It hurts to think that you'd be reporting on so much tragedy," she guessed.

Sal thought back to something Paul Harvey said once. If he allowed himself to cry on his radio show, some shows would be nothing but tears. Tears were for...well, they were for that God to shed, the God

that must have caused someone to care about those kids. But that wasn't his job - was it? "Even Paul Harvey doesn't shed tears on his broadcasts."

"Maybe he should," Monica suggested.

Sal sighed, then gave the letter back to Monica. "It's got a tape, too?" It came with one, yes. "You listen to it?"

"The singing isn't very good, but neither is mine. The rest...reminds me of the hymn. This little light of mine.'" She smiled. "God's love shines through on it."

"Good, I'm glad they'll get some help." He's once again trying to bottle it up, she considered.

"But," she explained, "you haven't heard it yet."

"Look, Monica, I've got a story to leave to cover in 15 minutes, I don't have time to hear anything."

She soothed the hurried man, and replied "there's one story on here I especially think you'll love, and it's just that long." He reluctantly agreed to listen to it on his headphones as he gobbled down a meal of doughnuts and coffee.

Monica prayed for a while, and soon discovered tears welling up in the man's eyes. "Well," she asked as he prepared to leave.

"That was beautiful. Whoever sends those is truly letting God work."

He put his coat on, and Monica sighed as Tess emphasized "just one more day." She sighed. "I know he's throwing up roadblocks everywhere, Miss Wings, but before you decide you're just going to reveal yourself and scare him off, think of why he might have wanted to become a reporter. I'm sure being perfectly objective isn't the dream of most young man."

Monica once again entered the newsroom bright and early, noticing Sal sitting beside Rob. "Great baseball game last night, huh, Monica?" She nodded at Rob. "Who's your favorite club?"

"The Angels." She grinned. "I'd like to say the Yankees, a few years ago they had quite a few people who really did live as God would want us to. But, nobody on Earth can stand them, they win so much." They all laughed.

Rob finished the soonest. "Yeah, you got that right. Man, it's games like that I live for; that's the joy of being a reporter."

Monica smiled sweetly. "What made you choose to be a reporter, Sal?"

"Well..." He glanced around, to ensure nobody else was in earshot. He didn't mind Rob hearing this, since he was such a close friend. "Don't tell noone, but...while Rob was following the Miracle Mets, I was watching Lone Ranger reruns. That's who I wanted to be"

"Oh, I love the Lone Ranger,'" the angel declared.

"Love' - is it still on," inquired Rob before he answered his own query. "Oh, yeah, probably the Family Channel or TVLand. That's about all I let my kids watch."

"I guess by that comparison," noted Monica, "you sort of compared reporting...to the Lone Ranger?"

Sal nodded. "Yeah, always being in the right place at the right time, once in a while making sure justice got done." He shook his head. "The times have changed so much."

"Oh, I don't think so," Monica reassured them, "there's a lot more evil in this world, but that's maybe because we need more Lone Rangers."

The newsman hummed and said "I bet that's why that one fellow's doing what he does." He explained to Rob the message of God's love sent to those children.

Monica crossed her knees and said "I think there are two kinds of Lone Rangers - those who fix things and those who drive others to fix things. Remember, in some episodes his only goal was to ensure a new sheriff got a good start, or something else. And when he knew things were okay, his work was done, and off he went into the sunset." She smiled. "He had a lot of faith."

"Yeah, he did." He grinned dreamily. "Yeah, it would have been fun to be like that."

"That tape and letter are still in my drawer, if you want to deliver them."

He smiled. "We'll go tonight, after work." \*\*\*

Sal and Monica pulled up to the foster home. It looked in adequate shape - not immaculate by any means, but certainly better than anything these kids have known, he told himself. "Sure would be nice if more families would volunteer to do this," he spoke absently.

Monica considered that the other foster children here would also benefit. However, she merely inquired as to whether Sal had considered a job writing a column instead.

"I've been offered that a couple time, yeah," he admitted. The angel knew one of the offers still stood, but said nothing.

The mother looked anxious to get a break and talk to any adult, even one she didn't recognize. "I know you, you're the reporter who did that story." He nodded, and introduced Monica as his secretary. "Pleased to meet you."

"Can we come in," inquired Monica. They entered to find several children eating and one older one reading. The children from the story still appeared rather gaunt. She commented that their health seemed to be improving. It was, though they were still asking about their little brother all the time. "Sal, tell her what we brought."

The reporter hesitated, and then said "well, I...we had an anonymous donor send a little message for the kids."

Monica jumped in. "You know how you saw all those cards and stuffed animals around the Oklahoma City bombing site for the deceased children. Well, there's someone who actually sends stuff to kids while they're still alive. Makes a lot more sense, huh?"

"It sure does."

Sal pulled out the tape and handed the letter to the mother. He'd been reading it on the way over. "It...uh...reassures the children their baby brother's in Heaven, and that God loves them, too, and it tells them about all the good stuff there..." He wished he could think of what else to say.

"That's wonderful, I'll have to let them listen to this tonight while we're getting ready for bed." The mother grinned as the kids came over to the guests from the dinner table, asking to hear it now. After insisting a couple times, the mother finally pulled out an old boom box and began playing the tape. The singing and talking about God warmed everyone all over.

"What about our baby brother," whined one of the children.

Monica smiled. Andrew had walked into the room. "He's with God in His perfect Heaven now."

"I wanna see him," cried the little girl.

Suddenly, Andrew appeared in his angelic glory. All around them gasped. "I'm afraid that can't be done."

Before Andrew had a chance to speak, the little girl asked "did you take my brother?"

"Yes, honey, I took him to where he'd be happy forever and ever. You see, I'm an angel."

Monica decided the suspense was off. She, too changed into her angelic glory, and explained. "I'm an angel, too. God loves each of you, that's why someone made this tape for you. And whenever it's your turn to go to Heaven, if you trust in Christ to forgive you, you'll be there with him again."

"Things seem to take a long time here on Earth, don't they?" The children nodded. "But to God, it's the mere blink of an eye. And then, you'll have forever together," said Andrew.

The mother smiled broadly. "That's beautiful. And, did God send you to comfort them?"

"Actually..." Monica began, but before she could continue, Sal spoke.

"You know, Ma'am, I think it was me they were here to help. See, I'd grown too bitter, too objective in my reporting. I'd forgotten the real reason I became a reporter, to write about things that touched people, about things that mattered so others could be aroused to do something." He thought a moment. "Like here, to get more foster

parents or better supervision of children. I can see now that's why God gave me the desire to report, so I could maybe get others to act. I've decided tomorrow, I'm going to accept a columnist's position. I intend to write about a lot of these cases, about just human interest stuff. So I can make a diff--" He glanced around. The angels had disappeared. "Where'd they go?"

"They flied away," spoke a little boy.

The child who'd been reading, then watching intently, pointed to the sky, where "shooting stars" appeared to be going up. "Look!"

The mother grinned broadly as all looked out the window. Sal muttered, barely audible. "Good bye, Lone Ranger. And thanks."

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file.